



Lakewood Discovery Center

Salina Parks and Recreation Department

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Summer 2006

Lakewood Discovery Center Newsletter Features

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Lakewood Discovery Center is the Natural Resources division of the Salina Parks & Recreation Department. LDC provides Salina with its own Urban Wildlife Sanctuary and Nature Center. Our mission and goal is to provide opportunities for members of the community and the surrounding area to explore and learn about the environment through discovery and hands on activities.

We strive to make the center a teaching tool by providing many outdoor aspects in an indoor setting. Visitors have the chance not only to interact with our many educational displays, but also get up close to some of the wildlife that lives in the park. Through these encounters, the visitors' awareness and knowledge of native wildlife will increase.

As our community grows, we also want to grow with them. We want to continue to provide a great place to observe and learn about nature. For no matter if you are younger or older, it is essential to remember that the environment is not ours, it is merely ours to take care of and pass along to the future caretakers of the land.

The Supervisor's Desk: The spring and summer seasons are always fast and furious

with activities and special events going on in our lives. This holds true at Lakewood also, for these are the seasons for "special events". Lakewood presents many programs and activities, but the "special event" is a creature of its own. Usually this term indicates that the program is not regularly offered, and is prepared for a large participating group. Often times multiple organizations are involved with the event to even out the preparation that is needed to sponsor the event.

As summer closes in on us, our first special event of the summer season fast approaches, this event is the Lakewood Fishing Derby (June 3rd). The fishing derby will provide an opportunity to fish at Lakewood on the statewide free fishing weekend. We will expect about 100 anglers, in 3 age categories, to participate and will have activities, prizes, and free food for all registered anglers. Like all other large events, the details and organization have to be lined out well in advance of the event date. By the time the event arrives the hard work has been done, except that of actually doing the event.

If you are putting on many large events you will come to a few conclusions: first, good volunteers are worth their weight in gold, feed them well. Second, events run so much smoother with good communication between all helpers and presenters; and third, whoever the event is for make sure they are enjoying their experience and are happy with the outcome, everything else is just gravy.

Lakewood offers a variety of special events throughout the year, which varies in ages and subjects. Some of our annual special events include: Saline County Water Festival (4th grade), Earth Day (3rd grade), Women's Only Show (general public), Back to School Fair (general public), and Eco-Meet (high school). There is a good chance that you may have heard about or even participated in some of them, and if you haven't go out and experience your first summer "Special Event".

Brian Underwood, Natural Resources Supervisor



Lakewood Wildlife Feature: "Backyard Beauties"



Spring is in full swing and summer is right around the corner! With the season change comes rising temperatures and well-needed moisture. The rain earlier in the month of May wet the earth, allowing for green things to grow. Along with all these changes came our summer birds, back from their winter migration destinations. What a couple of weeks we have had for bird watching here at the Lakewood Discovery Center! In one 30-minute period I was able to spot 14 different bird species! During the month of May, we spotted more than a few birds that we had not had a chance to see before in LDC's backyard education area.



Some of these more uncommon bird visitors that have recently dropped by are: the gray catbird, Baltimore oriole, brown thrasher, brown-headed cowbird, red-winged blackbird, and indigo bunting. Not that any of these species are especially rare, but they have not been regular visitors to our backyard habitat in the past. Let me take some time to tell you about these infrequent guests.

The gray catbird is, yes, gray *with* a black cap. It has an unusual call, a kind of mewing, like that of a vocal cat. I am in my fifth year here at LDC and this is the first year I have seen this species. We had a pair hopping around the backyard by our new and improved hummingbird garden. They were in search of food and made use of the open spaces in the yard. We also have had several Baltimore orioles in the new garden. They came swooping in to investigate our freshly planted Nicotina plants. The orioles hopped up to the plants and began nipping at the base of each of the flowers. This is something I had not seen before. They went from one plant to the next nipping and prodding the blossoms. I am not sure exactly what they were after, but it was a delight to watch these brilliant yellow-orange and black birds work the Nicotina over. Another visitor was the brown thrasher. We had one perch on top of our mixed seed feeder and help itself to the seed from where the lid had come off. The thrasher is a relative of the American robin, although it is a little larger, has a longer tail, and is a beautiful golden brown. We have also had the privilege of being a stop for the brown-headed cowbird. These migrant ground feeders make use of the seeds that other birds push out of the feeders to the ground below. This bird has a black body and a chocolate-brown head. It also has one of my favorite calls, which reminds me of water somehow. "Plunk-plink deedle-dee." It is hard to explain. If you would like to hear the brown-headed cowbird's call, come visit Lakewood to listen to our bird call sound machine. This is also the bird that avoids the responsibilities of parenthood by laying its eggs in other birds' nests. Another of our guests has been the red-winged blackbird. These birds have recently begun showing up on our feeders. Red-winged blackbirds are not unusual, but it is unusual to have them at birdfeeders. They are generally found around water where they nest in the cattails. This year we have had quite a few come up to the backyard to get an easy meal. Last of my infrequently seen birds is my favorite, the indigo bunting. This is a lovely little bird, brilliant blue with black on the wings. My coworkers and I spotted this little bird out in the parking lot eating up the cottonwood seeds that had landed there. We have also seen an indigo bunting feasting on the tree seeds that litter the concrete porch right outside our large sliding-glass doors.

Along with all these recognizable birds were a few birds with which I was not familiar, most likely warblers or vireos. These birds stayed in the canopy, making it hard to get a positive I.D. But that is okay. That leaves more exciting discoveries for another day.

If you would like to experience the fun and wonder of watching the birds, come be our guest. We invite you to pull up a seat, borrow some binoculars and a bird book, and sit back for a relaxing stint of bird watching. See what species others have seen by looking at our Bird Watchers' Registry, and add a few sightings of your own.

Lakewood Discovery Center's Backyard Birds Identified

American Goldfinch
American Robin
Baltimore Oriole
Black-capped Chickadee
Blue Jay
Brown Thrasher
Brown-headed Cowbird
Carolina Wren
Common Crow
Common Grackle
Downy Woodpecker
Eastern Bluebird
Eastern Phoebe
European Starling
Gray Catbird
Hairy Woodpecker
House Finch
Indigo Bunting
Dark-eyed Junco (winter)
Mourning Dove
Northern Cardinal
Northern Flicker
Northern Mockingbird
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-winged Blackbird
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Rufous-sided Towhee
Tufted Titmouse
White-breasted Nuthatch
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (winter)

We look forward to seeing you!

Anne Hoekstra, Park Naturalist





Educational Opportunities

Spring: (Listed in the P & R Spring Activities Guide. Call the main office to register: 309-5765.)

Spring Break Adventure Days: Bored during Spring Break? Looking for something to do. LDC offers programs on the Tuesday and Thursday of Salina Public Schools' Spring Break.

S.C.A.T.: All ages welcome. This 1½ hr program features Snacks, Crafts, Animals, and Trails. Participants will learn about native critters, take a guided nature walk, and make a snack as well as craft to take home.

T.B.A.: Check the Activity Guide each Spring for a different Thursday program.

Mother's Day Trip: All ages, 15 and under must be accompanied by an adult. Take mom on a trip she will remember. LDC offers a variety of sight-seeing opportunities and activities as we head out of town for fun.

Summer: (Listed in the P & R Summer Activities Guide. Call the main office to register: 309-5765.)

Father's Day Trips: All ages, 15 and under must be accompanied by an adult. Take dad on a trip he will enjoy. LDC offers a variety of sight-seeing opportunities and activities as we head out of town for a day of fun.

Backyard Detectives: Ages 4-5 and 6-8. These 1½ hr hour classes focus on one topic per, week, i.e. Creepy Crawlies. Each class makes a craft and snack and takes a nature walk in addition to other learning activities.

Jr. Explorers: Ages 9-12. This is an experiential learning series done in partnership with the Smoky Hill Museum. We do hands-on activities, interact with guest speakers, and travel to see what goes on behind the scenes. Each week has two days devoted to one topic.

G.R.E.A.T. Cops & Fossils: Grades 4th – 7th. These day long classes are a part of the Saline Co. Sheriff Department's G.R.E.A.T. program. Each class learns about the fossils that can be found in Kansas, and then travels to local fossil sites to search for fossils of their own. The participants will mount the fossils they find to take home.

Archery: Ages 7 and older. These 1 hr classes teach the sport's technique, safety, rules, and etiquette at a beginner and intermediate level.

Canoeing: Ages 7 and older. These 1 hr classes teach water safety and basic canoeing skills.

Fishing Explorers: Ages 7 and older. These day long programs offer several skill levels, beginning with Basics in Bluegills and moving on to Bass Fishing and Catfish. In each class, equipment, technique, and safety are taught.

Family Canoe Nights: All ages. These 45 min programs offer families an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors together with an evening of paddling on Lakewood Lake.

Fall: (Listed in the P & R Fall Activities Guide. Call the main office to register: 309-5765.)

Fall Family Nature Series:

Family Canoe Nights: All ages. These 45 min programs offer families an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors together with an evening of paddling on Lakewood Lake.

Campfire Stories: All ages welcome, although some of the stories are scary. ☺ Spend an October evening by the campfire, enjoying smores and hearing stories told by the LDC staff.

Pumpkin Fest: All ages. Celebrate the Halloween season with an evening of pumpkin carving. Pumpkins, carving tools, and treats are supplied.

Campfire Cooking: All ages. Learn the art of campfire cuisine. Techniques and "secrets" shared on how to make a fireside feast. Then try the different foods cooked that evening by the LDC staff. Past foods have included campfire lasagna, pot pie, and cinnamon donuts.

T.B.A.: Check the Activity Guide each Fall for other quarterly programming.

Winter: (Listed in the P & R Winter Activities Guide. Call the main office to register: 309-5765.)

Milford Lake Eagle Day: All ages, 15 and under must be accompanied by an adult. This day long program takes participants to Milford Lake where bald eagles nest. The trip includes touring the Milford Nature Center, an eagle program by the MNC staff, and time for eagle watching.

T.B.A.: Check the Activity Guide each Winter for other quarterly programming.

Year-Round :

In addition to the above set of programs, Lakewood offers Walk & Tours of the center, nature walks, girl & boy scout badge programs, and in-class programs. These programs are by appointment. Special topics can be requested for individual groups. Two weeks notice is required to book a program.





Lakewood Quarterly Programs



We at Lakewood Discovery Center strive to create programs and trips that explore the natural world while making the experience fun and educational. The physical activity encountered during these programs and trips range from minimal to strenuous activity. To better gauge whether a program is suited for your needs, we have assigned a star system to each event, ranging from 1-5 stars. 1 star = light walking and minimal activity, 2 stars = light walking and more than one activity, 3 stars = moderate walking/physical effort and extended hours of activity, 4 stars = moderate to considerable walking/physical activity, 5 stars = substantial walking/strenuous physical effort with activity. If you have any questions, please contact us at 785-826-7335.



4th Annual Fishing Derby

Lakewood Discovery Center presents our 4th Annual Fishing Derby! The Fishing Derby provides the youth of Salina and the surrounding counties an opportunity to experience Kansas's Great Outdoors, some perhaps for the first time. There will be contests, skill-oriented games, and PRIZES. Many participants may continue their involvement with Lakewood Discovery Center through our outdoor summer programs. This Annual Fishing Derby is one of the ways that Lakewood Discovery Center reaches out to the community and gets the youth acquainted with the natural world. (2 stars)

Saturday, June 3rd
Registration at 8:30
Fishing from 9-11 a.m.

Please make sure to sign up through the Parks and Recreation Main Office, City/County Building, Rm 100, 309-5765.

Father's Day of Discovery

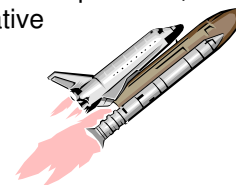
Have your family join us as we set out for exploration in Hutchinson. This journey will take us to Dillon Nature Center, where the natural world comes alive at your fingertips. We will also enjoy the Kansas Cosmosphere Museum, one of the largest air and space museums in America. We will participate in Dr. Goddard's Lab, view the IMAX experience, as well as tour the museum. After lunch we will venture to the Hutchinson Zoo, where the focus is on native Kansas animals. The zoo also features train rides and entertainment. (3 star)

When: Saturday, June 17th

Time: 8:00 a.m. (meet at Lakewood) return late afternoon (approx. 5:30 p.m.)

Limit: 20 participants (6 yrs. + recommended)

Fee: \$25.00 (transportation, entrance fees, and tour fees), lunch is on your own



Yosemite & Tahoe Tour

Take a well-deserved break and head out west to enjoy America's grandeur from the comfort of your plane seat. We will pass over a wide range of beautiful scenery from the western sand hills of Nebraska, to the rugged mountains of Colorado, across the Utah and Nevada basin, and finally the towering Sierras of California.

Our journey will take us to Reno, "The biggest little city in America". There we will have a day of entertainment and exploration on our own. The next morning we will set out for Yosemite National Park, the home to some of the most breath taking views and natural features in America, including: Yosemite valley, the famous peaks of Half Dome and El Capitan, redwood forests, and the Hetch Hetchy valley. We will retire for the day at the beautiful Yosemite Lodge, which is nestled in the towering trees of the valley and framed by the majestic Yosemite Falls.

We will enjoy the better part of two days in the park before driving back to Reno. The next day we will board the Lake Tahoe Ferry for a complete tour of the beautiful backdrops that surround the high Sierra lake, and enjoy a romantic dinner on the water. We will then have one more evening in Reno before returning to Salina. (3 stars)

When: Thursday, September 21 – Tuesday, September 26

Limit: 30 participants (18 yr. +)

Time: TBA

Fee: \$850 double occupancy (bus transportation, plane tickets, hotel rooms, park fees, and select meals)

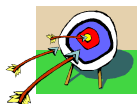




SUMMER PROGRAM OVERVIEW

If you have not signed up for the summer programs, now is the time because classes are filling up.

For general class descriptions, see page 3. For detailed class descriptions and registration prices, please see Salina's Parks and Recreation Summer Activities Guide. If you have not received one in the mail, they are available at the Parks and Recreation main office in the City/County Building on Ash St., Room 100.



Backyard Detectives: Ages 4-5, 10:30am – 12 noon Ages 6-8, 8:30am – 10:00am

<i>Flower Power:</i>	Monday, June 12 OR Wednesday, June 14
<i>Creepy Crawly Critters:</i>	Monday, June 19 OR Wednesday, June 21
<i>Sounds a Little Fishy to Me:</i>	Monday, June 26 OR Wednesday, June 28
<i>Our Feathered Friends:</i>	Monday, July 10 OR Wednesday, July 12
<i>The Squirrel's Tail:</i>	Monday, July 17 OR Wednesday, July 19
<i>Nifty Nature Crafts:</i>	Monday, July 24 OR Wednesday, July 26

Fishing Explorers: 7 years and older, 8:30am – 2:00pm

<i>Basics in Bluegill:</i>	Tuesday, June 6	Friday, June 9	Tuesday, June 13	Tuesday, June 11
	Friday, July 14	Tuesday, July 18		

<i>Bass Fishing*:</i>	Friday, June 16	Tuesday, June 20
	Friday, July 21	Tuesday, July 25

* You must have completed Basics in Bluegill to register.

<i>Catfish*:</i>	Friday, June 23	Tuesday, June 27
	Friday, July 28	Tuesday, August 1

Outdoor Skills Classes: 7 years and older, 8:00am – 9:00am, 9:30am – 10:30am, **OR** 11:00am – 12 noon

<i>Archery:</i>	Session I:	Wednesdays, June 7, 14, & 21
	Session II:	Wednesdays, July 12, 19, & 26

<i>Canoeing:</i>	Session I:	Thursdays, June 8, 15, & 22
	Session II:	Thursdays, July 13, 20, & 27

G.R.E.A.T. Cops and Fossils: 4th – 7th grades (just completed), 8:30am – 2:00pm

Session I:	Wednesday, June 7
Session II:	Wednesday, June 21
Session III:	Wednesday, July 12

Junior Explorers: 9 – 12 years old, Monday, 9:00am – 12 noon & Thursday, 8:30am – 2:30pm

<i>Great Grains Batman!:</i>	June 12 & 15	
<i>It's Plantastic!:</i>	June 19 & 22	
<i>Kansas Cowpokes:</i>	June 26 & 29	
<i>Creative Kansas!:</i>	July 10 & 13	
<i>Locomotive Magic:</i>	July 17 & 20	(Thursday's class goes until 3:00pm.)
<i>Insect Mania:</i>	July 24 & 27	





LAKEWOOD DISCOVERY CENTER

Wild Birthday Parties



Looking for a new and unique way to celebrate your child's birthday? Lakewood Discovery Center has just that! We offer a variety of programs that are not only educational, but also entertaining and fascinating for everyone. Come and celebrate your special day with us!

Who: Young persons age 4 and up (some age restrictions apply for certain programs)

When: Parties available Monday – Thursday with starting times between 9:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Reservations made by contracting Lakewood Discovery Center at 826-7335.
Please reserve at least two weeks in advance.

What: The program will be 1 ½ hrs.

Approximately 1 hr is reserved for the activity and ~ ½ hr for gifts and treats, although this schedule can be flexible.

Persons reserving the program shall provide the treats and gifts.

Fee: A fee of \$25 or \$30 will be required for the program, depending on program chosen.

A \$2 fee will be applied for each child above the number of 15, up to a maximum of 20 children

Activities

\$25 Package

Creature Feature: Meet the animal ambassadors of Lakewood! We will be getting up close and personal with some of our animal friends, such as turtles, frogs, toads, salamanders, lizards, and snakes, to learn the amazing ways they eat, hide, and protect themselves in the wild.

Nature Walk: Explore the trails at Lakewood with us! Our Urban Wildlife Sanctuary offers lots to see and discover! We will learn about the trees, plants, and animals that make Lakewood their home. Who knows what we will see?!

Lakewood Games: We all love to play games. How about games that help us learn about nature? Even better! Together we will play a variety of nature-oriented games that are fun *and* educational. (*Ages 7 and up.*)

\$30 Package

Weird Science: Whoa! Cool! This is what you will hear as we wow and amaze partygoers with volcanoes, rockets, and much more. Come learn with us as we perform science experiments with ordinary household items. (*Ages 8 and up.*)

Canoeing: Come and cruise the waters of Lakewood! We will start with basic canoeing skills, then hit the water ready for fun! (*Offered May 1 – August 31, ages 10 and up.*)

Archery: Learn the basics of archery, then try your best Robin Hood imitation here at the archery range in our forest! (*Offered May 1 – August 31, ages 10 and up.*)

Bubble Magic: Pop! Kids love bubbles! We will explore how bubbles work and then see how many different ways we can make them and play with them. (*Offered May 1 – August 31.*)



Naturalist Notes *by Bill Gaskill*



The summer season is fast approaching and Lakewood is starting to rev up its engine. Natural Resources staff nearly doubles in size with the hiring of seasonal staff. This year Lakewood will employ five Natural Resource workers. These helping hands assist with the increased programming the warm weather brings. The seasonal staff has the opportunity to experience good old-fashioned manual labor and some of the more exciting jobs that Lakewood offers.

The traditional throwing of the wood chips is the first activity that the seasonal employees partake in. If you have been to Lakewood, you know that there are many trails located in the park. All of these trails are lined with wood chips. The City of Salina has a huge pile of wood chips located off Markley Road that Lakewood tries to put a dent in every summer. The process of chipping the trails is a very time consuming job and, as can be imagined, is slightly monotonous. There have been several techniques developed to help speed up the process that always entertain the full-time staff. The chipping crew this year is a veteran group, so we are expecting the trails to be chipped in record time. If you happen to be walking the trails of Lakewood during this time period, there may be some extra amusement to be found.

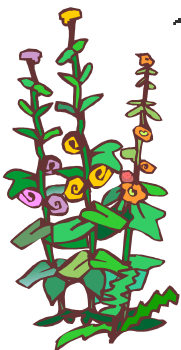
Our summer programs begin the second week of June so the chipping must be done in three weeks so that the other projects that are scheduled can be completed. I mentioned many of these projects in the last newsletter and we are steaming toward beginning some of them. Our seasonal employees each take a turn assisting in the teaching of our outdoor skill classes like fishing, archery, canoeing and fossil hunting. All of our part-time employees experience nature programs for all ages. There are many stories that they could tell about their experiences here, and I'm sure that they will have more to tell after another season of working at "The Wood." Whether it is a rat nest in a reel or diving in to fix the aerator in the lake, there is always something that brings our summer seasonals running back each summer.



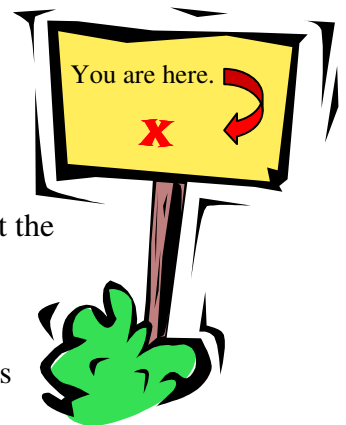
WHAT'S NEW @ LAKEWOOD?

For those of you who like to keep up on the improvements and changes we make around the LDC, we are pleased to announce the completion of several projects:

1. For those who walk the nature trails, you'll be pleased to see our new trail maps set at the head of each trail for easy reference.
2. The nose station in the Senses Room has been redesigned and is finished. Not only does it have fragrances to figure out, it also features six different animals and explains how each uses its sense of smell. You may also create your own nose masks of these animals to take home.
3. And finally, LDC wants to introduce its new and improved Hummingbird Garden, found in the southeast corner of our backyard education area. Our naturalists spent the better part of May designing, constructing, and planting this new addition to the backyard. It is our largest garden and features numerous hummingbird-attracting blooms, birdbaths, a flower-lined path, and a hummingbird bench for our guests to sit back and enjoy watching our feathered friends. And we know the garden is doing its job, for we have already had a hummingbird visitor!



So, as always, you are invited to come on out to Lakewood Discovery Center and Urban Wildlife Sanctuary and see for yourself what exciting changes are taking place!



Lakewood Fun Page

Lakewood Trivia!

Adult Trivia Questions:

1. What is the most common hawk in Kansas?
2. What term is used to describe any predacious bird with a hooked beak and talons?
3. What bird was introduced into Central Park in 1890, and spread to the California coast by the 1940s?

Kids' Trivia Questions:

1. What bird has a call that sounds like "chick-a-dee-dee-dee?"
2. What red bird has a crest, a black mask, and says, "what . . . cheer-cheer-cheer!"
3. What tiny bird drinks nectar and can fly backwards?

Kids! Draw your favorite backyard bird.



(Send in your picture, or a copy, be sure to include your name and age. The LDC judges will pick their favorite from those submitted and publish it in the next issue.)

For Lakewood Trivia simply send in your name and your answers. If all your answers are correct, we will put your name in the next newsletter.

Stump the Naturalist

Please submit a question pertaining to Kansas wildlife/environment for our Naturalists to ponder. In the next issue we will print your question and our answer. If you stump our naturalists, we will put your name in the Newsletter Hall of Fame.

No one sent me anything after the first newsletter. I'm still on the lookout for those tough questions.



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